

# THE UNITED NATIONS PERMANENT FORUM ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES

TOGETHER WE ACHIEVE

## International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples – 9 August 2018

*Indigenous peoples' migration and movement*

ECOSOC Chamber

3:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

August 9 is commemorated as the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples. Each year this day is celebrated around the world and at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.

As part of the commemoration in New York, the Indigenous Peoples and Development Branch - Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues/DISD/DESA is organizing an event that will bring together indigenous peoples' organizations, UN agencies, Member States, civil society and the general public.

This year's theme is *Indigenous peoples' migration and movement*.

The event will feature a panel discussion on the current situation of indigenous territories, the root causes of migration, trans-border movement, and displacement, with a specific focus on indigenous peoples living in urban areas and across international borders. The panel discussion will also examine the challenges and ways forward to revitalize indigenous peoples' identities and encourage the protection of their rights in or outside their traditional territories.

### Format

The opening will begin with a traditional call followed by statements from and the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, Mr. Liu Zhenmin (TBC), the Chair of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, Ms. Mariam Wallet Aboubakrine and the Permanent Representative of El Salvador to the United Nations, H.E. Mr. Rubén Armando Escalante Hasbún,

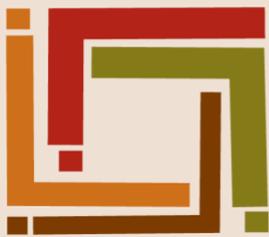
The second part of the proceedings will include presentations from indigenous experts and guest speakers on issues related to the theme, and moderated by the Chief of the Indigenous Peoples and Development Branch - Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous, Ms. Chandra Roy-Henriksen.

The event will be webcasted

**When: Thursday 9 August 2018 from 3:00 pm to 6:00 pm**

**Where: ECOSOC Chamber at the United Nations Headquarters.**





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**Who: Indigenous Peoples, Member States, UN agencies, funds and programmes, Civil Society and the General public are invited to attend.**

## **Background Information**

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples enumerates a series of rights related to the theme of the International Day, including the right to self-determination and cultural development (art. 3); the right to maintain and strengthen distinct political, legal, economic, social and cultural institutions (art. 5); the right to practice and revitalize cultural traditions and customs (art. 11); and the right to maintain and develop contacts, relations and cooperation, including activities for spiritual, cultural, political, economic and social purposes, with their own members as well as other peoples across borders (art. 36).

## **Indigenous peoples around the world**

Over 370 million indigenous peoples live in more than 90 countries across the world, making up 5,000 distinct indigenous groups and speaking over 4,000 languages.<sup>1</sup> Indigenous peoples are the holders of unique cultures, traditions and knowledge systems, they have a special relationship with their lands and hold diverse concepts of development based on their own worldviews and priorities. Indigenous peoples, up to this day, maintain a constant struggle for the recognition of their distinct identities and their rights to lands, territories and resources.

## **Indigenous lands, territories and resources**

Indigenous peoples are increasingly being impacted by development and conflict, and often have to move away from their ancestral lands and territories. They tend to live in remote areas, near or across international borders, with some indigenous peoples sharing the same identity and culture, yet living in different countries. Many indigenous peoples continue to practice traditional livelihoods that are nomadic or semi-nomadic and move from place to place in search of better pastures and/or swidden fields etc., within their ancestral lands and territories. They embrace the technological changes and advances that occur and include innovative practices that strengthen their cultural identity.

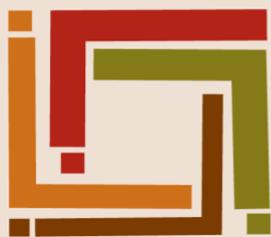
## **Migration**

As a result of the loss of their lands, territories and resources due to development and other pressures, many indigenous peoples migrate to urban areas in search of better prospects of life, education and employment. They also migrate between countries and/or to escape conflict, persecution and climate change impacts. Despite the widespread assumption that indigenous peoples live overwhelmingly in rural territories, the current reality is that

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<sup>1</sup> FAO. "FAO and indigenous peoples: Key Facts." <http://www.fao.org/indigenous-peoples/en/> (2018).





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sprawling urban areas are now home to a significant proportion of indigenous populations. In Latin America, for example, around 40 per cent of all indigenous peoples live in urban areas— even 80 per cent in some countries of the region.<sup>2</sup> In most cases, indigenous peoples who migrate find better employment opportunities and improve their economic situation but do so with the underlying effect of alienating themselves from their traditional lands and customs. Additionally, indigenous migrants face a myriad of challenges when integrating into new ways of life and socio-economic systems, including lack of access to public services and the consequences of additional layers of discrimination. Trans-border indigenous communities are similarly confronted with restrictions to their traditional livelihoods, cultural practices, and benefits from resources within their territories but in a foreign country

## Challenges and ways forward

The protection of indigenous peoples' rights and identity, in or outside their traditional territories, especially in urban settings has proven a challenge. Indigenous peoples have sought new avenues to revitalize their culture and strengthen their identity across countries and further protect their rights. In this regard, indigenous women play a key role in maintaining socio-cultural ties and transmitting their traditional knowledge to future generations.

Indigenous peoples seek to be recognized for their vibrant identity and culture, and for their rights to be protected, as they adapt to changing circumstances and environments.

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<sup>2</sup> CEPAL. "Indigenous peoples and urban settlements: spatial distribution, internal migration and living conditions." (2007).

